TALON

NEWS MAGAZINE

February/ March 2010

Students Speak Out on State of Union 2010.....>>>

TALON
NEWS MAGAZINE

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I- Journalism

I Love Dunkin sticks and film

I love to spend time at home.

I Love Snowboarding

I love... Working with kids, and food

I love laughter.

I Love life

I love BRONNIES!

Layout

I Love to LOVE!

I love Peanutbutter and Jelly Sandwiches

I ♡ PBJ

DF + PBJ

Faculty Advisor

I love spring.

EDITORIAL POLICY

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Got something to say ?????

We're always looking to expand our Talon team. If you are interested in writing stories, taking pictures, or page layout, please feel free to contact me. Additionally, we also appreciate any feedback, good or bad.
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DAG Promotes Disability Awareness at Avila

By Rachel Kloser

Avila University has many clubs and organizations which students can join and participate in. One of these organizations is the Disability Advocacy Group or DAG for short. This organization is dedicated to promoting the awareness about disabilities, especially those with which people are unfamiliar. Joe Barton, a current and active member of DAG stated, "DAG's main goal is to promote awareness of disabilities that people are not aware of. Information about disabilities breeds awareness and awareness breeds tolerance." Barten is a Special Education major, and feels that it is very important for people to be aware and tolerable of disabilities. He stresses the importance of realizing that a person with a disability is a person first and has a disability second.

Cassie Gaughan, Special Education Major and member of DAG wants everyone to know that DAG is open to everyone; anyone can join. She says, "I believe we are still a small organization, but with more members we could have a bigger presence on campus," and she, as well as Barton, welcome anyone who is considering joining DAG. Gaughan feels that DAG is a great way to get people involved in the community, and a great way to spread the awareness of disabilities to everyone.

This organization is based solely at Avila University, and needs all the members it can obtain. Anyone who feels people are unjustly judged by their disabilities, or who wants to spread awareness should join this organization. On January 30, 2010, Barton and Gaughan participated in the "Polar Plunge" to raise money for their cause. Together, they raised over eight hundred dollars for DAG.

Taking the polar plunge.

Still dry before that freezing plunge.

Avila got the Funk: Mayor holds town meeting on campus

By Tim Matson

On February 3rd, 2010, Mayor Mark Funkhouser came to Avila for his 63rd town hall meeting since being elected in 2007. Funkhouser expressed concerns with education which was highlighted through out the meeting. He believes in order to see change in Kansas City we need to start with today's youth and communicate messages to them, allowing change in the future. Kansas City has fourteen different school districts, which holds 275 schools and over 75,000 students K-12. Public safety, around the schools, a main topic addressed and discussed by the mayor. Mayor Funkhouser wants to help his city and create an environment where kids feel safe and can walk to school again. He plans on implementing the "Schools First Program," which will cost 100 million dollars. To approach the new program consists of a five step process to help today's problem with public safety. This will ensure our neighborhoods around schools will be fixed up, constructing sidewalks as needed and making the local community around the schools safer for our future students and residents.

The Mayor is going to re-authorize public safety sales tax to add more police officers in the vicinity's around our schools and neighborhoods. Initially, Funkhouser will as the city council to target the neighborhoods around our schools first. Then expand to the other neighborhoods without schools in their local vicinity. Separate departments will be organized to focus and raise awareness. These groups will also strive to receive grants to help pay for these improvements. Mayor funkhouser wants to help Kansas City change to a more desirable city to live in but he states that, "The city is more like a battle ship and it will take some time to turn it around."

Mayor Mark Funkhouser
(courtesy KC Business Journal)

Budget
Car and Truck Rental

Dear Mr. President,

Dear Mr. President,

After viewing your State of the Union Address on January 27, 2010, I have a better idea of the actions you are taking and the things you are planning for this wonderful country of ours. I would like to thank you for the effort you are putting forth to get our economy up and running again. It has been a difficult few years, to be sure. If everything goes as planned, I'm sure things will get better and somewhat easier for everyone. I would also like to thank you for the ideas you are putting forth to make going to college easier and cheaper on the American people. I think it is an excellent idea to require people to pay only ten percent of their income to their student loans; this will make paying the loans and still living much easier. Also, I am excited about the plan to forgive loans after ten or twenty years, depending on the area of work one goes into. I have been dreading paying off the student loans, and have been looking for ways to have them forgiven, to lessen the burden on me, so that I can focus on teaching. I am glad and thankful that you would want to put something like this into effect to help those of us who struggle to pay for our schooling. Now, I also have to add the negative to the positive; I am not certain how I feel about you attempting to withdraw the troops by August. I do think that it needs to be done, but I'm not sure of how successful it will really be. I'm hoping for the best, and I hope that things will work out the way they are planned. Also, I hope you are planning to add some much needed changes to the standardized testing and the education reforms. There are too many things wrong with our current plan, and I'm hoping that you're aware of these issues, and are planning to address them properly. While I do still have my doubts about you and your plans, I am thankful for many of the things that you have done for me, personally, as well as America as a whole.

Dear President Obama,

My name is Emilee Bickleman and I am currently a student at Avila University in Kansas City, Missouri. Your State of the Union speech Wednesday night was very informative to me because I am not involved in politics. However, as I listened to your valuable points, I developed a better understanding about our country and our state of affairs. You mentioned in your speech that you are hopeful for our country and now I feel hopeful.

The focus on creating jobs was the most important point of your speech to me. Since I am a college student that will be graduating in two years, I would like to be able to get a job upon graduation. Several of the students that were watching you on television in my group were expressing the same ideas. I would like to be a contributor and tax payer in our society after graduation. I think all jobs, whether it be salary or hourly, are important to our economy.

Your emphasis on giving tax breaks to small businesses and encouraging innovation are two ways to stimulate the economy at the grass roots level. I especially liked your idea focusing on businesses dealing with clean energy. Here in Kansas, there has been a surge in the wind energy industry. I recently saw in central Kansas, 50 to 100 windmills that were nonexistent two years ago. My generation really believes in energy efficiency without pollution.

I really liked your points about the United States having world class education. We should be a leader in math and sciences in the world. Putting an emphasis on community colleges is a key step in improving our skills in education. Community colleges provide a vehicle for people who do not have sufficient finances and high academic achievements in high school.

I still think that Health Insurance Reform is needed; however, it has turned into a political football. Maybe we should start over and come up with a simpler solution rather than a thousand plus page document. We should just focus on five major points and solved them first. Then review the outcomes before additional changes are made in Health Care Reform.

It really bothers me that we are so depended on other countries for our economy. I think your goal of increasing exports could be a good start for us to be more depended on ourselves. Decreasing our importation of oil from foreign sources could also improve our self sufficiency.

I appreciate all of your ideas on helping our country and I hope we are able to succeed and preserve my future and future generations.

Sincerely,
Emilee Bickleman

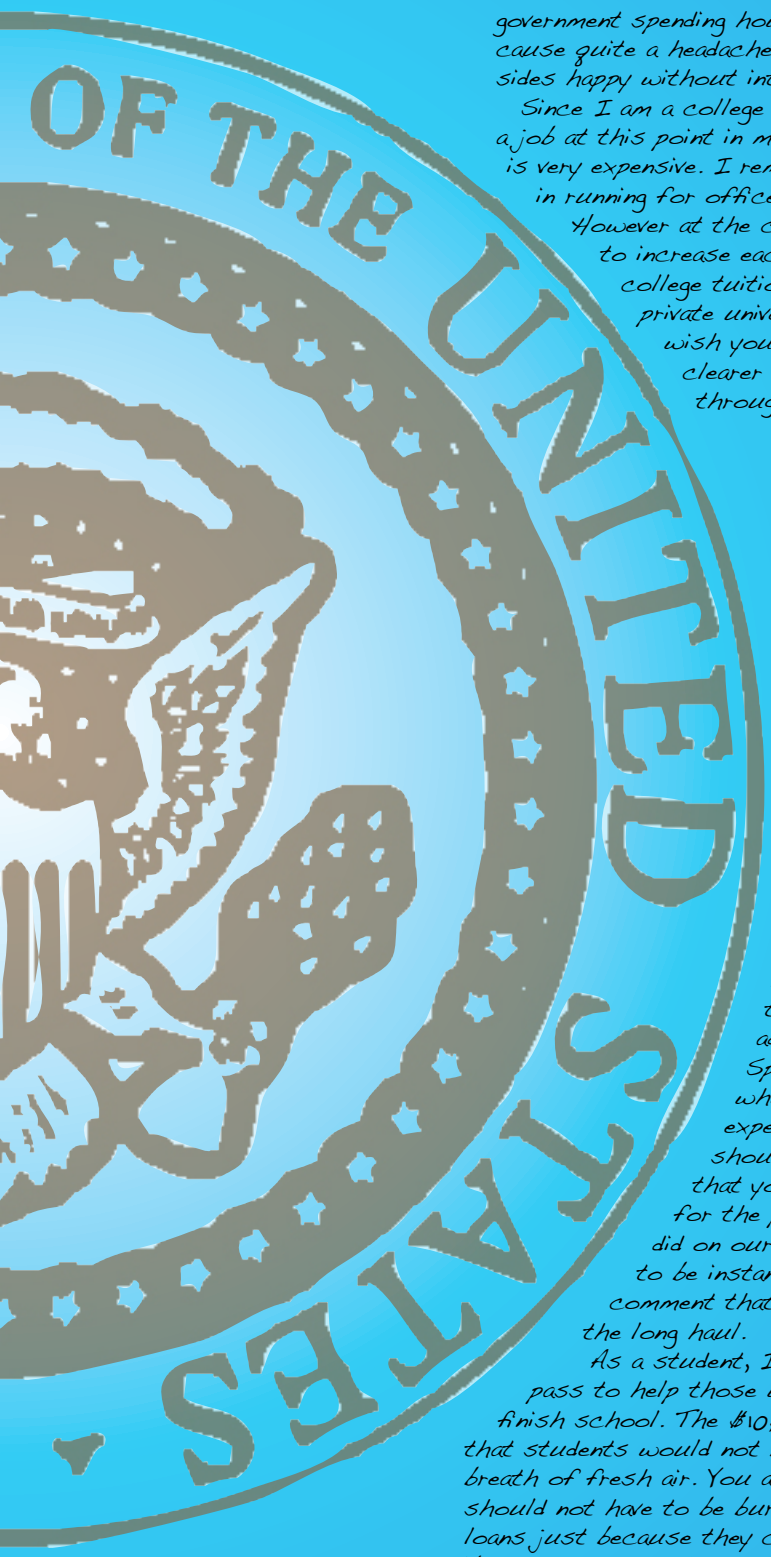
Dear Mr. President,

I am addressing you in regards to your first year as our President and Commander and Chief. After watching you're State of the Union address on January 27, 2010 I feel as an American citizen that you have taken many positive steps that will help benefit America with the tough financial circumstances you took over under. I felt calm and optimistic when listening to your fierce tone when calling for a new jobs bill. Telling the capacity crowd," I want a jobs bill on my desk without delay."

With your State of the Union speech under your belt I am contacting you to ask how you think suspending government spending for three years will negatively affect the American public? In your State of the Union address you said you were prepared to veto the suspension of government spending for three years if it did not pass the senate to start in 2011. I can see the vision and long term goal of saving on unnecessary government spending however this seems like a plan that will cause quite a headache in Washington. How will you keep both sides happy without interfering with the point of the bill?

Since I am a college student athlete and do not have time for a job at this point in my life, I will have to say that college is very expensive. I remember one of your main arguments in running for office was making college more affordable. However at the cost of my college tuition continues to increase each semester. If these plans to lower college tuition were a play on words not including private universities or some other exemptions I wish you and your administration would have been clearer because I feel you have not followed through for the traditional student.

Sincerely, Bransen D. Ireland



Dear Mr. President.

I was very impressed with the State of the Union Speech and thought you spoke very intelligently. Your campaign was run on the premise of change, but people have expressed that your first year in office has not resembled the change that you adamantly promised. I appreciate your use of reason in trying to get the American people to be patient while your administration tries to reverse the damaged done by the Bush administration. As you said during the State of the Union Speech," Democracy in a nation of 300 million can be noisy," which is exactly why it is unreasonable for people to expect that change is going to happen over night. Americans should allow adequate time to see the results of policies that your administration is implementing. It took eight years for the policies of the previous administration do the damage it did on our economy and the reversal of those policies are not going to be instantaneous. It is going to take time, but I appreciate your comment that" I don't quit," alluding to the fact that you are in it for the long haul.

As a student, I am impressed with the policies you would like to pass to help those who face immense debt after they finish school. The $10,000 tax credit for four years that students would not have to pay back sounded like a breath of fresh air. You also mentioned that students should not have to be burdened with paying back student loans just because they choose to get an education. You stated that when you renew the Elementary and Secondary Education Act that you want to make college more affordable and that students should only have to pay ten percent of their income to repay loans. I believe this will be an incentive for future generations to send their children to college. No one should be deprived of an education that allows them to compete for better jobs, just because they do not have access to monetary resources. Mr. President thank you for proposing bills that helps those who face financial hurdles to continue their education.

Sincerely,
Brandon Scott Dunlap

Dear President Obama,

After watching the State of The Union Address you gave on Wednesday, January 2010 I was left with hope and more understanding towards your goals and hopes for our nation. The beginning on the speech was captivating and motivating. You admitted that " Change has come, but not come fast enough", that statement left me with the feeling that you aren't trying to tell us exactly what we want to hear. I felt as if you were trying to give us a real sense of what is going on, and not just a sugar-coated fantasy to believe in.

When you talked about how you have given tax cuts to so many Americans who are struggling in this economy I agreed. It is usually hard enough to pay for college, on top of every other necessity you need in life. But, in this economy it is becoming harder and more of a burden. I know people who would love to go to college, but are unable to because they have to work to make money and don't have enough to go to school. A $10,000 allowance to those in college is excellent and I think more than fair! Education is the main component for the future, if you aren't planning ahead for who will take care of you when you are older wouldn't make any sense.

Another aspect I love is that you are trying to have companies be more " clean energy efficient". This is a subject I feel very strongly about and am more than happy to hear you mention it in your speech. We are destroying our Earth by the way we have treated it in the past, hence we didn't know as much about it then as we do now. Now that we know what we are doing, we have to do something about it! I will be behind any clean energy reforms!

Overall, the speech was motivating and captivating. You covered more topics involving the need for jobs and the job reform bill, another topic I agree with strongly. The health reform bill is something I am skeptical about. I think that having you as our president is exactly what this nation needed even though many people like to say otherwise!

Sincerely,
Elyssa Noordam

No Brakes for Avila Spirit Squad

By Jessica Morrow

When the majority of the Avila student body is at home for the holidays enjoying a month away from school and stress the Avila Spirit Squad is here working hard everyday and preparing for the most important weekend of the year. Two-a-day practices and long hours in the gym are normal for them this time of the year. The Avila cheer and dance teams attend the Universal Cheer and Dance Associations Collegiate National Championships in Orlando, Florida every January. This year both teams did exceptionally well.

The Glitter Girls compete in the Open Division which includes junior colleges, NAIA institutions and NCAA Division II and III schools. The team competes with two different dances, hip hop and jazz; the team had the honor of winning 3rd place in the nation in their hip hop routine, this dance was an apparent crowd favorite. This dance won the ladies a bronze medal to bring back to Kansas City. They also did well in the jazz division by placing eighth against many very highly competitive dance teams from across the nation. The Glitter Girls do half time performances at home football and basketball games each week to help prepare them for competition. These dances are fast paced and very entertaining. It is very impressive that the girls can choreograph and perfect so many routines throughout the year while also working on their national's dances.

The Avila cheerleading squad also took the trip to Florida a couple of weeks ago. The ladies were excited and ready to compete after a difficult year in 2009 because of injuries. The competition consists of preliminary and final rounds. In pre-lims, the cheer team had a nearly perfect performance and they were seated 4th in the competition. The last performance of the day was completed with perfection and the team was teary eyed with joy and pride. Many more teams had to compete and waiting to find out what place they got was excruciating. Avila placed 4th in the nation defeating the reigning national champions from Southern Connecticut State University. This is the highest that Avila has ever placed at the national competition and the team was ecstatic. With 5 strong seniors leading the way with positive attitudes, sweat, and tears, the team pulled together under the most frustrating of circumstances to earn a very rewarding national placement.

The Cheerleaders and Glitter girls will have one more competition this year and that is the Heart of America Conference Championship on February 13th in Fayette, Missouri at Central Methodist University where they will try to win back their conference title. Unlike the national competition, winning the conference championship is determined by a combination of the two team's scores. Both teams are looking forward to bringing back the 2010 H.A.A.C Spirit Team Championship banner to Avila University.

A New Year, With a New Coach!

By Colleen Reagan

Avila Eagle Volleyball team is really shaping up this year. Lady Eagles has gotten a new coach and are ready to have a successful season in the Fall of 2010. Krista Newman is the one who will be taking this team to victory.

Newman graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in sociology with a minor in coaching from Northwest Missouri State University. She was also a volleyball player as she attended school there. She was named to the 2002 All-Missouri Valley Conference team for volleyball.

Newman has eight years of coaching experience under her belt. She recently was the head coach for the KC Power Volleyball Club. Newman also was the head volleyball coach at Chicago State University, as well as, assistant coach at Longview Community College.

Avila University is very excited for Newman to be part of the athletic department. She is going to be a major asset to the Lady Eagles! The volleyball girls are ready to go all the way and believe Newman will help them accomplish this!

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Laughter is the Best Policy

By Faye Gipe

"I am here to remind the species of the species. I am Lucien Percival Smith. And without me, without my shattered crippled brain, you will never again be frightened by what you might have become. Or indeed, by what your future might make you."

This quote, taken from the second act of the play The Boys Next Door, is a key message in the show. Director Rick Truman related this message to a view that many people currently hold regarding the events in Haiti. There is a push to aid those directly affected by the disaster, but not many avenues to go about it. Meanwhile, a large majority of people view the situation with gratefulness for our own comfort. In the midst of turmoil it is easy to lose sight of those things certain people groups have and for which they should be thankful. Seeing what has been lost or not given to others shines a spotlight on that which they too could have been without. This play depicts a group of four developmentally delayed men and their caretaker as they make an effort to integrate into society.

"It's about four guys who are really a family," says director and Avila alum Rick Truman. "They're really fun, likeable people."

Truman, who achieved his undergraduate degree in theatre-acting in 1991 with Avila, is now working full time as managing director at the Quality Hill Playhouse and says this is the seventh show he has directed for the Goppert Theatre.

This production presents certain complications for both director and actors as it portrays the taboo of the time. Set in the 80s, the story takes place at time when being mentally handicapped was much less socially acceptable. The social taboo that has been created makes it difficult to show the humor of the play without appearing to make fun of the situations therein. However, both director and actors have stated that their main objective is to be real and honest.

"You can't comment on it."

"It addresses every problem that we have functioning as people," claims actor Michael Hudgens who plays the part of Norman, a developmentally delayed man who works at a doughnut shop and has a growing fetish for doughnuts. "It's a good show. It's got everything. It's honest and that's what we want to see. The second you're dishonest onstage, it doesn't work. You can't comment on it."

Indeed, this script, its performance, and those involved in both portraying and viewing it are the comment. Allowing the work to speak for itself and letting it hit you in the gut will be all the comment it needs.

Wil Andrews-Weiss, who plays Lucien, the slowest member of the group, says of the show, "It runs through the full spectrum of emotions. People who come shouldn't be afraid to laugh."

At certain points throughout the production, certain characters step out of their conditions for a moment to relate to audience members in a way they will more readily understand.

Xanda Pilley, who plays Norman's love interest Sheila, warns that "there are moments in the show when the characters come out of the mentally handicapped block and reveal how they see themselves in a way we can comprehend."

In this way, the play not only encourages the audience to laugh and sympathize, but also to listen. Overall it promises to be a riotously good show with humor and a purpose! Playing February 25-27 at 8 p.m. and February 28 at 2 p.m. in Goppert.

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